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PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHVN #0325/01 1100956  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 200956Z APR 07  
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1140

UNCLAS VIENTIANE 000325

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DEPT FOR EAP/MLS  
DEPT FOR G/TIP  
DEPT FOR DRL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [ELAB](#) [KCRM](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [SMIG](#) [LA](#)

SUBJECT: Anti-Trafficking in Persons Proposals for Laos

Ref: A) 07 STATE 28143, B) April 12 Terry Mobley, Amy LeMar, and

Rebecca Billings Email, C) April 9 Jane Sigmon and Ambassador  
Haslach Email, D) April 19 Jane Sigmon and Terry Mobley Email

¶1. Following are the anti-trafficking in persons proposals received by Embassy Vientiane. In total, eleven completed proposals were submitted by four non-governmental organizations, two international organizations, and one for-profit Lao enterprise. The following organizations submitted proposals: The International Office for Migration (1); The Asia Foundation (1); Village Focus International (1); Save the Children Australia (2); the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2); Assistance for Women in Distressing Situations (2); and SML Legal Consultants (2). Embassy Vientiane recommends funding of the five ESF and INCLE proposals summarized in paragraph three, all of which address serious deficiencies identified in the Annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report for Laos and the Interim Assessment. The remaining six proposals are listed briefly at the end of the cable. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Justice submitted a draft proposal on April 19. The Embassy asked that DOJ scale back the proposal and email the final version directly to G/TIP (see Comment Section). The other eleven completed proposals with budgets and resumes will be sent by email to G/TIP Rebecca Billings per reftel and ref email.

¶2. Embassy points of contact are Political Officers Terry Mobley, MobleyTD@state.gov, and Harvey Somers, SomersHA@state.gov. (Note: Beginning June 1, 2007, Public Diplomacy Officer Amy Archibald, ArchibaldAE@state.gov, will replace Terry Mobley as the primary Embassy point of contact for TIP-related activities. End Note.)

¶3. Proposal summaries follow in order of priority, as determined by the Embassy.

Proposal One

¶A. NAME OF APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

International Office for Migration (IOM)

¶B. REQUESTED FUNDING AMOUNT

USD 398,719

¶C. PROJECT TITLE

Project for Building a Comprehensive Reception, Recovery, and Reintegration Support Process for Victims of Trafficking in Lao PDR

¶D. PROJECT DURATION

Two Years

¶E. PROPOSAL ABSTRACT

Reception and reintegration services in the Lao PDR, though improved, lag far behind similar systems and structures established in Thailand and Cambodia. Given the sharp increase in the number of Lao victims of trafficking returned through IOM's Regional Return and Reintegration Program since initiated in 2000, the lack of Lao Government capacity represents a serious need. Lao TIP victims who require return and reintegration assistance account for more than half of the total number of returned TIP victims within the region who have been assisted under IOM's existing Return and Reintegration Program.

Through the efforts of this project, the ability of the Lao Government to successfully reintegrate returning victims of trafficking through an institutionalized case management and referral process will be greatly improved leading to a reduction in both time delays for returning victims home and subsequent prospects for re-trafficking. The project will also put in place an established framework for providing assistance services for cases of internal trafficking as well as cases referred to the Lao Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MLSW) outside of the formal return process. Extending reception services beyond Vientiane to Savannakhet and other border provinces with high prevalence of trafficking will also be assessed as part of this project.

The project will also contribute to the Lao Government's ability to contribute to regional collaboration efforts outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation Against Trafficking in Persons in the Greater Mekong Region (COMMIT) signed in 2004 as well as to fulfill its responsibilities under the bilateral MOU on trafficking signed with Thailand in 2005.

## Proposal Two

### 1A. NAME OF APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

Village Focus International (VFI)

### 1B. REQUESTED FUNDING AMOUNT

USD 139,150

### 1C. PROJECT TITLE

Legal Advocacy and Victim Support

### 1D. PROJECT DURATION

Year One of a Planned Five Year Project

### 1E. PROPOSAL ABSTRACT

One of the major problems facing citizens in the Lao PDR - in all sectors and at all levels - is the lack of access to legal rights information, in a language or format that the recipient can understand and use in daily life. Typically, local officials and local people alike are not aware of the existing body of laws and do not know how these laws are relevant to their lives. In regard to

trafficking and related issues, there is no comprehensive document that organizes all trafficking-related laws and decrees together and interprets them in a reader-friendly way. Furthermore, most vulnerable peoples - those that are most likely to be trafficked - are often illiterate and/or ethnic minority peoples who do not speak, read or write Lao and do not understand complex written materials; therefore, they remain ignorant of both their rights and responsibilities under the law. This project addresses the need to create a comprehensive legal advocacy program on trafficking that focuses on information delivery to diverse and semi-literate or illiterate people as well as a parallel trainer curriculum for government staff and NGO workers.

This project will develop legal advocacy materials and guidebooks for national use in the Lao language (including radio programs, theatre productions, posters, etc.) and at least one minority language. The project will also link legal advocacy to village education and to victims of trafficking and will create a system for

victim referrals to proper agencies for reintegration, protection, and training.

Expected Results of the project include: a Legal Guidebook on Rights/Responsibilities regarding trafficking, labor migration, and child rights; Lao language and Katang language radio serials on trafficking and labor migration; a trainer guidebook in the Lao language to guide listener groups in the above materials; a youth theater troupe trained to deliver shows on trafficking and labor migration issues; an expanded and improved database of trafficking victims coordinated through the Asia Against Child Trafficking network of NGOs; a system for referring victims to government and/or NGO shelters & education programs; and a provincial Campaign Against Child Trafficking in Salavan Province.

#### Proposal Three

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1A. NAME OF APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

The Asia Foundation (TAF)

1B. REQUESTED FUNDING AMOUNT

USD 205,692

1C. PROJECT TITLE

Strengthening Protection for Victims of Trafficking and Prosecution of Traffickers in Laos

1D. PROJECT DURATION

Two Years

1E. PROPOSAL ABSTRACT

Laos faces a serious human trafficking problem without the necessary capacity to counter it. The Law on Development and Protection of Women, passed in 2004, is generally recognized as providing an adequate legal framework for the protection of victims and the prosecution of traffickers. Yet the Law is not widely understood by those charged with its enforcement, rendering it largely ineffectual. Furthermore, at present there is no coordinated effort among government agencies, service providers, and anti-trafficking professionals to implement the Law, resulting in poor protection of victims and weak efforts toward prosecuting traffickers. The Asia Foundation will draw on its extensive experience in combating trafficking in the Mekong Region and the technical expertise of its local staff based in Bangkok to strengthen services, systems, and coordination efforts in Laos to adequately protect victims and strengthen the prosecution of traffickers. Activities will fall under two objectives: 1) to increase enforcement of the Law on Development and Protection of Women; and 2) to ensure that interventions to protect victims and prosecute traffickers are well coordinated and sustainable. Expected results include: improved capacity of the legal sector to combat trafficking in persons; increased government commitment to countering trafficking; strengthened rule of law in regard to trafficking in persons; and improved protection of victims' rights.

#### Proposal Four

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1A. NAME OF APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

Save the Children Australia (SCA)

1B. REQUESTED FUNDING AMOUNT

USD 144,400

1C. PROJECT TITLE

Strengthening Anti-Human Trafficking Responses in Northern Lao PDR

1D. PROJECT DURATION

Twenty Months

1E. PROPOSAL ABSTRACT

The Lao national response in dealing with human trafficking is improving. However, Laos lacks the capacity to adequately and appropriately deal with issues and cases of trafficking and migration, particularly amongst its frontline police and immigration officials who work along the border areas. Despite the establishment of the Lao Anti-People Trafficking Unit (LAPTU) in Vientiane Municipality (and a smaller unit in Bokeo Province), funding constraints have prevented the dissemination of specially designed anti-trafficking training to police in provincial areas. This has created a gap between the central-level anti-trafficking response and actual implementation within the border areas where it is most needed.

As part of SCA's Cross-Border Anti-Human Trafficking efforts, this project will support the training of frontline police, immigration and other local officials within the northern provinces of Luang Namtha, Bokeo and Sayaboury. The project will also raise awareness amongst key provincial and district-level staff members from the Lao Youth Union (LYU), Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MLSW), and the Lao Women's Union (LWU). Additionally, the project will raise awareness among village authorities of the role that local authorities should play in identifying and dealing with cases of human trafficking.

SCA will also support the dissemination of information and the practical application of the 2004 Law on Development and Protection of Women, the National Children's Law, as well as other relevant laws and regulations. During project implementation and beyond, training participants and community stakeholders will be further supported by forging practical links and engaging with SCA's other projects in the northern provinces - namely, SCA's Cross-Border Project, Youth at Risk Project, Womens' Socio-Economic Empowerment Project, and Children's Justice Project. A Monitoring and Evaluation Plan will be developed in the initial stages of this new project in line with SCA's Program Quality Framework.

Proposal Five

1A. NAME OF APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

1B. REQUESTED FUNDING AMOUNT

USD 187,500

1C. PROJECT TITLE

Strengthening of the Legal and Law Enforcement Institutions to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking in the Lao PDR

1D. PROJECT DURATION

This project was originally undertaken for two years in October 2006. The governments of Canada, Norway, and Sweden have provided all but USD 187,500 of the total USD 448,500 project costs. UNODC plans to extend the project for one to two additional years contingent on further funding.

1E. PROPOSAL ABSTRACT

The project was initiated in October 2006 and aims at strengthening the capacity of criminal justice institutions in the Lao PDR, including the judiciary and the government law enforcement bodies, to prevent and combat human trafficking and related forms of organized crime. The project assesses the implementation of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, particularly Women and Children (TIPPP). The project's main objective is to enhance Lao criminal justice mechanisms and law enforcement against trafficking in human beings. This takes place through encouraging proposed amendments to Lao criminal law provisions, and training criminal justice practitioners and law

enforcement officials in order to strengthen the country's capacity to investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers as well as protect victims.

#### 14. OTHER PROPOSALS

Proposal Six: Organization: Assistance for Women in Distressing Situations; Project: Repatriation, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration of Victims of Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation in the Lao PDR; Duration: One Year; Budget: USD 140,570.

Proposal Seven: Organization: SML Consultants; Project: TIP Training for Prosecutors and Law Enforcement Officers; Duration: One Year; Budget: USD 100,430.

Proposal Eight: Organization: Assistance for Women in Distressing Situations; Project: Social Enterprise Project for the Reintegration of Women Victims of Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation; Duration: One Year; Budget: USD 94,220.

Proposal Nine: Organization: SML Consultants; Project: TIP Training for Judges; Duration: One Year; Budget: USD 48,908.

Proposal Ten: Organization: Save the Children Australia; Project: Research into Trafficking and Human Security of Selected Ethnic Communities in Northern Laos; Duration: Two Years; Budget: USD 170,550.

Proposal Eleven: Organization: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; Project: Combating a Root Cause of Human Trafficking; Duration: Two Years; Budget: USD 370,640.

#### Comments

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15. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) submitted a draft proposal to the Embassy on April 19. In the form it was submitted, the Embassy felt several aspects of the proposal are not feasible in Laos at this time, particularly the concept of posting a full-time contractor in Vientiane. According to DOJ, the contractor would not be under NSDD38 authority, which would not be acceptable to the Embassy. Additionally, the posting of a full-time contractor in Laos would not be accepted by the Lao Government. Working directly with Lao law enforcement is also a non-starter. However, the elements of the proposal dealing with the training of trainers as well as translating and using some aspects of DOJ's model TIP program that was developed in Indonesia would potentially be very useful in Laos and might possibly be implemented via DOJ's Bangkok office. The Embassy requested that DOJ consider scaling back its draft proposal, focusing on development of a law enforcement manual and periodic training seminars potentially organized in cooperation with DOJ staff members at Embassy Bangkok, who have regional responsibilities. We have asked that DOJ send its final proposal by email to Rebecca Billings and Amy LeMar, copying the Embassy.

16. Based on the Embassy's communication with G/TIP, it appears World Vision's 2006 TIP project may be funded with FY 06 funds (Ref C). In the event World Vision's 2006 proposal is not funded, however, World Vision has submitted a revised version of the same proposal (expanded somewhat) this year. As per G/TIP's advice, the Embassy did not include that proposal among proposals received for FY 07 (Ref D). The Embassy will, however, forward the revised World Vision proposal to G/TIP Rebecca Billings by email.

HASLACH